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TAGS: [ENRG](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EUN](#) [AF](#) [ZI](#) [BO](#) [UK](#)
SUBJECT: UK EXPECTATIONS FOR JANUARY GAERC: GAZA AND
ENERGY SECURITY TO DOMINATE DISCUSSION

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Classified By: Political Counselor Richard Mills, Jr. for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶1. (C) Summary. The UK expects next steps in bolstering the peace in Gaza and how to strengthen EU energy security to dominate the January 26-27 General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) Meeting, according to Paul Williams, the Foreign Office EU Correspondent, who spoke with Poloff on January 22. The UK also anticipates an initial "scoping" discussion of an EU position on the resettlement of Guantanamo detainees. The UK is pleased with the anticipated GAERC statement and action on Zimbabwe. Belarus will not be discussed at this GAERC, according to Williams. Williams' specific comments in response to ref A and GAERC agenda items follow below. End summary.

¶2. (C) Zimbabwe: The UK is pleased that the EU will act to significantly expand the number of individuals and parastatels subject to EU sanctions. Zimbabwe will not be a subject of discussion at the meeting, according to Williams, agreement having already been reached on the expansion of sanctions and the wording of the GAERC conclusion on the situation in Zimbabwe. Williams said the conclusions will contain language criticizing the failure of the Mugabe government to act in good faith with the opposition and to address the continuing humanitarian crisis.

¶3. (C) Belarus: Although the Czech presidency will present its work plan for its presidency at the GAERC, including its proposal to host the Eastern Partnership Summit in May to which Belarus may be invited, there is no specific agenda item on Belarus and Williams does not expect any discussion on Belarus. In response to ref A points on Belarus, Williams said HMG agrees that, at this point, the Lukashenka government needs to do more to justify an invitation for Lukashenka to attend the Summit. Williams thought Prague had cleverly timed the Summit for May, so that it would follow the EU's review of the existing EU sanctions on Belarus which expire in April. The combination of the sanctions rollover and a possible Summit invitation give the EU "good leverage" to demand concrete reform steps from Lukashenka at that time.

¶4. (C) Guantanamo Bay Detainees: This is on the GAERC agenda in response to the Portuguese Foreign Minister's letter suggesting there be an internal EU discussion of the issue. Williams said the UK agreed a discussion would be useful, though the UK does not expect any concrete EU actions to come out of next week's discussion, other than perhaps a conclusion that welcomes President Obama's actions thus far to close Guantanamo. The UK expects an initial "scoping" discussion at next week's GAERC that elicits a range of Members' views - from support for resettlement assistance to some members expressing concerns about the political and

legal implications of such action. (Embassy note. Williams did not identify which EU capitals might have such concerns. End note.) The UK is not certain that there can be, ultimately, EU-wide action on detainee resettlement, as it is a question for individual members to decide and explore bilaterally with the USG. London recognizes, however, that several EU Members now considering resettling detainees will want a strong statement of EU support for resettlement and also want the USG to make an initial "EU-wide approach" on resettlement before taking any action to resettle detainees. The UK expects the GAERC discussion to produce a tasking for a working group to develop a detailed position for the EU to eventually adopt that would signal strong EU support for closing Guantanamo Bay and encouraging individual Members to take what actions they can to that end.

15. (C) Gaza: The "big issue" at the GAERC, Williams commented, and one that is still in flux because the EU Foreign Ministers will be meeting with regional counterparts this coming weekend. Williams expected the GAERC discussion on Gaza -- which will be held during the Foreign Ministers' lunch so no aides will be present -- to center on three areas: humanitarian aid and access; status of both sides' efforts to honor the "clamping down on smuggling and opening the border crossings formula"; and the mid-term goal of bolstering the broader, comprehensive peace process. Williams said that the EU Members would welcome the apparent news that President Obama had "worked the phones" with regional leaders, which was something the EU Members had wanted to see occur. The UK will press for GAERC conclusions that make clear the need for end to arms smuggling into Gaza and that the EU stands ready to assist

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with the opening of border crossings where appropriate. Foreign Minister Miliband will brief the other Ministers on the UK's offer of assistance from the Royal Navy in patrolling the Red Sea to stop arms smuggling via that route.

16. (C) Energy Security: The other issue that the UK expects to dominate the GAERC discussion will be energy security. Although it appears the Ukrainian gas crisis has been resolved, the issue of diversity supply and routes remains pressing for the EU, Williams stressed. The UK agrees with ref A points on the need for the EU to focus on developing both diversity of supply and routes. The UK also believes that the EU needs to focus on eliminating barriers to trade in the internal EU gas market that prevent rapid shifts of gas supplies when needed to address supply shortages and interruptions. The UK wants to make this point strongly and push for EU action on identifying trade barriers and removing them. Williams acknowledged that although there is agreement on the general goal of greater energy security, there are "lots of different views on what it means and how to achieve it" within the EU. The UK intends to press the issue from the climate change and stability of supply angles, rather than discuss it solely in the context of the Ukrainian/Russian impasse.

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